

Message Text

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65

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-07 PA-02 PRS-01 USIA-15 CIAE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 TRSE-00 OPR-02 SCSE-00 SCA-01 COME-00

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6717

UNCLAS BEIRUT 13021

FOR NEA/ARN DAY

E.O.11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN, LE, BEXP

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE LETTER TO TIME CONCERNING OCTOBER 20

ARTICLE ON DEPARTURE OF U.S. FIRMS FROM BEIRUT

REF: BEIRUT 12962

1. A VAST MAJORITY OF LEBANESE ARE MOST SENSITIVE TO FOREIGN FIRMS IN BEIRUT, NOT ONLY FOR THE PRESTIGE THEIR PRESENCE ENTAILS BUT ALSO OF COURSE FOR FINANCIAL BENEFITS DERIVED THEREFROM. OCTOBER 20 TIME ARTICLE ENTITLED "GOODBYE BEIRUT, HELLO ATHENS" ACCORDINGLY MOST UNFORTUNATE, PARTICULARLY AS ITS EXAGGERATION IS RATHER SHOCKING (I CAN PERSONNALLY ATTEST TO LATTER IN THAT MY WIFE TRAVELED TO ATHENS OCTOBER 10 ON HALF EMPTY AIRCRAFT). THEREFORE BELIEVE DEPARTMENT MIGHT WISH ASK TIME PUBLISH FOLLOWING AS LETTER TO EDITOR FROM ME.

2. QUOTE ARTICLE ENTITLED "GOODBYE BEIRUT, HELLO, ATHENS" IN YOUR OCT 20 ISSUE UNFORTUNATELY GIVES IMPRESSION THAT BULK OF AMERICAN FIRMS ESTABLISHED IN BEIRUT ARE DEPARTING. IN FACT A RELATIVELY SMALL NUMBER OF THE 300 ODD AMERICAN FIRMS WITH OFFICES IN BEIRUT HAVE LEFT THIS CITY. MOST OF THESE DEPARTURES ARE ON A PARTIAL OR TEMPORARY BASIS. OF COURSE SHOULD PRESENT TROUBLES CONTINUE, MORE AND MORE FIRMS WILL BE OBLIGED RECONSIDER REMAINING

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IN WHAT HERETOFORE HAD BEEN AN IDEAL LOCATION FOR DOING BUSINESS

IN THE MIDDLE EAST. INDEED, IT IS THE AWARENESS OF ALL THAT LEBANON
AND THE LEBANESE HAVE TO OFFER AMERICAN COMPANIES THAT ACCOUNTS
FOR THE FACT THAT VAST MAJORITY OF U.S. FIRMS WITH OFFICES IN
BEIRUT
HAVE REFUSED TO CLOSE THE LATTER. SINCERELY, END QUOTE

3. WE HAVE NOT STATED SPECIFIC INACCURACIES CITED REFTEL AS THIS
WOULD BE LENGTHY PROCESS AND COULD RESULT IN NITPICKING. MOREOVER,
THE OVERALL FIGURE OF 25 FIRMS DEPARTING COULD BE JUSTIFIED BY
INCLUDING FIRMS THAT HAVE LEFT TEMPORARILY OR HAVE REMOVED
PART OF THIER OPERATIONS OR EVACUATED DEPENDENTS.
GODLEY

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